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*Governor*

## State of Nebraska

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### **NEWS RELEASE For Immediate Release**



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#### **IBACH ENCOURAGES COMMUNICATION BETWEEN PESTICIDE APPLICATORS, SPECIALTY CROP PRODUCERS**

LINCOLN - As trees and plants green up and soil temperatures rise across the state, farm operations of all sizes and types are getting set to begin another planting season.

Nebraska Department of Agriculture (NDA) Director Greg Ibach is encouraging anyone who will be applying pesticide products during the busy spring season to be mindful of best management practices and use good communication with their neighbors. Pesticides include all categories of control applications such as herbicides, insecticides and fungicides.

“It’s important for our commodity crop farmers and our growing sector of specialty crop farmers to work together so everyone can be successful,” Ibach said. “Herbicide applications are critical for corn and soybean production, but there are a number of specialty crops, such as grape vines, that are sensitive to these products.”

One way farmers can open the door of communication is through DriftWatch™. This website is a free, voluntary service that allows those with pesticide sensitive crops, organic crops and beehives to report their field locations. Pesticide applicators can review the website to gain an understanding of the locations of specialty crops in their area.

“For example, Nebraska’s vineyards will soon begin ‘bud break,’ or the official start of the vines’ annual growth cycle, and these plants are extremely vulnerable during this time period,” Ibach said. “It’s also time for our commodity crop growers to ready their fields for planting, including herbicide applications. Communication between all parties is important to ensure successful crop production for everyone.”

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Applicators also can register on the DriftWatch™ website, facilitating email notifications to the applicators when a new sensitive crop site is registered in their local area.

The DriftWatch™ website can be found online at <http://www.fieldwatch.com>. The Nebraska Department of Agriculture monitors the DriftWatch™ site for the state. For questions about it, contact Craig Romary with NDA at (402) 471-2351.

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